

Claims 1-65 remain in the application and have been amended hereby.

As will be noted from the Declaration, Applicant is a citizen and resident of Japan and this application originated there.

Accordingly, the amendments to the specification are made to place the application in idiomatic English, and the claims are amended to place them in better condition for examination.

An early and favorable examination on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

The Abstract of the Disclosure has been amended as follows:

--[When audio] Audio data [is] are played back by[, for example,] a personal computer[, contents are played back,] a relationship with a playback process [can be] is recognized [even more] easily [than a conventional way]. [The displays] Displays showing the contents of play lists are arranged and displayed so that the contents become continuous in sequence in a playback sequence from [the] content [which] that is currently being played back from a display of an operation element [which] that causes an image of a playback process to appear or from a display showing the content which is currently being played back. When the playback of one piece of content of one play list from among a plurality of play lists is terminated[, in a case where] and one piece of content of [the] an other play list is played back, at least the content [which] that is currently being played back and [the] content to be subsequently played back [next] are displayed so that the contents can be [mutually] distinguished [from the other content].--

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-65 have been amended as follows:

--1. (Amended) A playback apparatus, comprising:

setting means for setting portions to be partially played back in each content of a [group] plurality of contents based on [the basis of] a predetermined cut-out pattern in which at least a playback time is set;

selection means for selecting [a piece of] each content in sequence from [said group] the plurality of contents; and

playback means for sequentially playing back [said] the portions to be partially played back [which are] set in the selected content.

--2. (Amended) [A] The playback apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein playback is performed [in] such [a way] that a predetermined sound effect is interposed between [said] the portions to be partially played back.

--3. (Amended) [A] The playback apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein playback is performed [in] such [a way] that [one] a sound effect is selected by [an] random selection from a plurality of sound effects for each section between [said] the portions to be partially played back and [that] the selected sound effect is interposed between [said] the portions to be partially played back.

--4. (Amended) [A] The playback apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein [said] the playback time is randomly varied for each of [said] the plurality of contents based on [the

basis of] a predetermined reference time.

--5. (Amended) [A] The playback apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein [said] the cut-out pattern is selectable.

--6. (Amended) [A] The playback apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein [said] the cut-out pattern is selectable[,] and [said] the sound [effects are] effect is switched in accordance with [said] the cut-out pattern.

--7. (Amended) [A] The playback apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein [said] the cut-out pattern is selectable[,] and [the] a connection between [said] the sound effect and [said] a cut-out portion is switched in accordance with [said] the cut-out pattern.

--8. (Amended) [A] The playback apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein [said] the cut-out pattern is selectable[,] and [said] the plurality of sound effects is switched in accordance with [said] the cut-out pattern.

--9. (Amended) [A] The playback apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein [said] the cut-out pattern is selectable[,] and [the] a connection between [said] the sound effect and [said] a cut-out portion is switched in accordance with [said] the cut-out pattern.

--10. (Amended) [A] The playback apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the cut-out pattern is selectable[,] and [said] the portion to be partially played back is played back based on a sound effect in accordance with [said] the cut-out pattern.

--11. (Amended) A playback method, comprising the steps of:

setting portions to be partially played back in each content of a [group] plurality of contents based on [the basis of] a predetermined cut-out pattern in which at least a playback time is set;

selecting [a piece of] each content in sequence from [said group] the plurality of contents; and

sequentially playing back [said] the portions to be partially played back [which are] set in the selected content.

--12. (Amended) [A] The playback method according to Claim 11, wherein playback is performed [in] such [a way] that a predetermined sound effect is interposed between [said] the portions to be partially played back.

--13. (Amended) [A] The playback method according to Claim 11, wherein playback is performed [in] such [a way] that [one] a sound effect is selected by [an] random selection from a plurality of sound effects for each section between [said] the portions to be partially played back and [that] the

selected sound effect is interposed between [said] the portions to be partially played back.

--14. (Amended) [A] The playback method according to Claim 11, wherein [said] the playback time is irregularly varied for each of [said] the plurality of contents based on [the basis of] a predetermined reference time.

--15. (Amended) [A] The playback method according to Claim 11, wherein [said] the cut-out pattern is selectable.

--16. (Amended) [A] The playback method according to Claim 12, wherein [said] the cut-out pattern is selectable[,] and [said] the sound [effects are] effect is switched in accordance with [said] the cut-out pattern.

--17. (Amended) [A] The playback method according to Claim 12, wherein [said] the cut-out pattern is selectable[,] and [the] a connection between [said] the sound effect and [said] a cut-out portion is switched in accordance with [said] the cut-out pattern.

--18. (Amended) [A] The playback method according to Claim 13, wherein [said] the cut-out pattern is selectable[,] and [said] the plurality of sound effects is switched in accordance with [said] the cut-out pattern.

--19. (Amended) [A] The playback method according to Claim 13, wherein [said] the cut-out pattern is selectable[,]
and [the] a connection between [said] the sound effect and
[said] a cut-out portion is switched in accordance with [said]
the cut-out pattern.

--20. (Amended) [A] The playback method according to Claim 11, wherein [said] the cut-out pattern is selectable[,]
and [said] the portions to be partially played back are played
back based on [the] a sound effect in accordance with [said]
the cut-out pattern.

--21. (Amended) A recording medium on which a playback
procedure of playing back grouped contents is recorded, [said]
the playback procedure comprising the steps of:

setting portions to be partially played back in each
content of a [group] plurality of contents based on [the basis
of] a predetermined cut-out pattern in which at least a
playback time is set;

selecting a piece of content in sequence from [said
group] the plurality of contents; and

sequentially playing back [said] the portions to be
partially played back [which are] set in the selected content.

--22. (Amended) [A] The recording medium according to Claim 21, [said] the playback procedure further comprising the
step of performing playback [in] such [a way] that a

predetermined sound effect is interposed between [said] the portions to be partially played back.

--23. (Amended) [A] The recording medium according to Claim 21, [said] the playback procedure further comprising the step of performing playback [in] such [a way] that [one] a sound effect based on [an] a random selection is selected from a plurality of sound effects for each section between [said] the portions to be partially played back and [that] the selected sound effect is interposed between [said] the portions to be partially played back.

--24. (Amended) [A] The recording medium according to Claim 21, [said] the playback procedure further comprising the step of irregularly varying [said] the playback time for each of [said] the plurality of contents based on [the basis of] a predetermined reference time.

--25. (Amended) A playback apparatus for playing back [various] contents in response to an operation on a display screen, [said] the playback apparatus comprising:

first switching means for switching [the] operating conditions of a processing system [which] that processes at least [said] the contents in response to an operation of a predetermined operation element; and

second switching means for switching [the] a design of [said] the display screen in response to the switching

performed by the first switching means.

--26. (Amended) [A] The playback apparatus according to Claim 25, wherein[, in response to the operation of said operation element,] a corresponding list is selected from a plurality of lists for setting the operating conditions of [said] the processing system[, and the operating conditions of [said] the processing system [which] that processes [said] the contents are switched in accordance with the selected list in response to the operation of the operation element.

--27. (Amended) A playback method for playing back [various] contents in response to an operation on a display screen, [said] the playback method comprising the steps of:

switching [the] operating conditions of a processing system [which] that processes at least [said] the contents in response to an operation of a predetermined operation element; and

switching [the] a design of [said] the display screen in response to the switching of the operating conditions.

--28. (Amended) [A] The playback method according to Claim 27, wherein[, in response to an operation of said operation element,] a corresponding list is selected from a plurality of lists for setting the operating conditions of [said] the processing system[, and the operating conditions of [said] the processing system [which] that processes [said]